

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10  
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P R 031438Z MAR 78  
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6970  
INFO SIT-REP COLLECTIVE  
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER  
USNMR SHAPE BELGIUM  
CINCUSNAVEUR, LONDON ENG  
CINCUSAFE RAMSTEIN AB GER  
COMSIXTHFLT  
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FICEURLANT NORFOLK VA  
FOSIF ROTA SPAIN  
DIA WASHDC  
CINCUSAREUR HEIDELBERG GER  
USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES IT

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 3 BEIRUT 1161

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PINS, PINT, MILI, ASEC, LE  
SUBJECT: LEBANESE SITUATION FEB. 24- MAR 2

REF: BEIRUT 1026 (DTG 240901Z FEB 78)

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. THERE WERE NO MAJOR SECURITY INCIDENTS  
RELATED TO FAYYADIYAH. THE JOINT LEBANESE-SYRIAN INVESTIGATIVE  
COMMITTEE TEMPORARILY SUSPENDED ITS MEETINGS, ACCORDING TO  
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PRESS REPORTS. FOREIGN MINISTER BOUTROS VISITED DAMASCUS.  
PRIME MINISTER HOSS CONFIRMED THAT GOL WOULD SEEK AN  
EXTENSION OF THE ADF'S MANDATE. SYRIAN SOLDIERS ATTEMPTED  
TO OCCUPY OUR NEW CHANCERY UNDER CONSTRUCTION, BUT WITHDREW  
WHEN TOLD IT BELONGED TO THE UNITED STATES. PHALANGE GUNMEN  
FIRED ON THE PRINTANNIA HOTEL IN BRUMMANA. SHELLING CON-  
TINUED IN SOUTH LEBANON. SAIQA UNITS REPORTEDLY MOVED INTO TYRE.

A UNITED NATIONS REPORT SAID ROBBERIES OF U.N. OBSERVERS IN SOUTH LEBANON BY CHRISTIAN FORCES WERE INCREASING. THIRTEEN MARONITE DEPUTIES FORMED A NEW PARLIAMENTARY BLOC. THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT OFFICIALLY INAUGURATED DR. HAROLD E. HOELSCHER AS ITS EIGHTH PRESIDENT. THE GOVERNMENT MADE A NEW OFFERING OF TREASURY BILLS. END SUMMARY.

2. AFTERMATH OF FAYYADIYAH, FEBRUARY 15 - MARCH 2.

A. THERE HAVE BEEN NO MAJOR SECURITY INCIDENTS RELATED TO FAYYADIYAH SINCE CHRISTIAN MILITIA KILLED TWO SYRIAN SOLDIERS IN FURN ASH-SHUBBAK ON FEBRUARY 16 AND THE BODIES TO TWO DEAD SYRIAN SOLDIERS WERE DISCOVERED IN NABA' ON FEBRUARY 16.

B. ON FEBRUARY 17 THE INTERNAL SECURITY FORCES ARRESTED THREE PEOPLE SUSPECTED OF INVOLVEMENT IN THE FURN ASH-SHUBBAK KILLINGS, ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS. THE AUTHORITIES LATER PLACED UNDER HOUSE ARREST OTHER SYRIANS AND LEBANESE INVOLVED IN THE ORIGINAL FAYYADIYAH INCIDENTS, INCLUDING CAPTAIN SAMI ASHKAR, A LEBANESE OFFICER IN CHARGE OF RECRUIT TRAINING AT FAYYADIYAH BARRACKS AND ONE OF THE PEOPLE MOST WANTED BY THE SYRIANS. LEBANESE SUSPECTS IN THE FURN ASH-SHUBBAK AFFAIR ARE IN HIDING, HOWEVER, ACCORDING TO DANY CHAMOUN AND KARIM PAKRADOUNI.

C. ON FEBRUARY 18 THE GOL IMPOSED "SELECTIVE" CENSORSHIP  
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ON FOREIGN JOURNALISTS IN LEBANON. THIS MOVE WAS TRIGGERED BY REUTERS AND OTHER REPORTS ON FEBRUARY 16, WHICH CITED A SPOKESMAN OF THE NATIONAL LIBERAL PARTY AS SAYING THE SYRIANS WERE MASSING FORCES TO COMMIT "GENOCIDE" AGAINST THE CHRISTIANS IN EAST BEIRUT. PARTY LEADER CAMILLE CHAMOUN LATER DENIED THE STORY, BUT REUTERS SAYS IT HAS INCONTROVERTIBLE EVIDENCE THAT THE NLP ISSUED THE STATEMENT, AND THE BBC SAYS THERE WAS A FORMAL, WRITTEN NLP PRESS RELEASE.

D. ON FEBRUARY 20 AND 21 ALMOST ALL SCHOOLS IN THE EAST BEIRUT AREA OPENED.

E. ON FEBRUARY 24 THE MAIN DAMASCUS ROAD IN FRONT OF FAYYADIYAH BARRACKS WAS OPENED TO TRAFFIC BOTH WAYS.

F. ALSO ON FEBRUARY 24, CAMILLE CHAMOUN AND PIERRE GEMAYEL ISSUED SEPARATE STATEMENTS TO THE PRESS SAYING THAT THEIR FORCES HAD NOT PARTICIPATED IN THE FIGHTING AGAINST THE SYRIANS DURING THE FAYYADIYAH INCIDENTS.

G. ON FEBRUARY 27, THE TROOPS AT FAYYADIYAH BARRACKS RESUMED THEIR ROUTINE DAILY TRAINING, WHICH HAD BEEN

SUSPENDED SINCE THE FIGHTING THERE ON FEBRUARY 7.

3. JOINT INVESTIGATIVE COMMISSION.

THE LEBANESE-SYRIAN JOINT INVESTIGATIVE COMMISSION, COM-  
PRISED OF THREE LEBANESE AND TWO SYRIAN MEMBERS, HAS NOT  
MET SINCE FEBRUARY 26 BECAUSE OF THE PRESENCE OF ITS  
TWO SYRIAN MEMBERS IN DAMASCUS, ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS.  
THE COMMISSION'S CONTINUED FAILURE TO MEET HAS GIVEN RISE TO  
SPECULATION THAT ITS MEMBERS HAVE BEEN UNABLE TO AGREE ON A  
REPORT WHICH IS TO BE SUBMITTED TO THE JOINT SPECIAL SECURITY  
COURT. THE COMMISSION HAD ALREADY INTERROGATED 25 PEOPLE  
AND HAD 11 OF THEM ARRESTED AS OF FEBRUARY 23, ACCORDING TO  
L'ORIENT LE-JOUR.

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P R 031438Z MAR 78  
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4. BOUTROS VISITS DAMASCUS.

FOREIGN MINISTER FUAD BOUTROS VISITED DAMASCUS FROM FEBRUARY 28 TO MARCH 1, WHERE HE MET WITH PRESIDENT ASAD AND OTHER SYRIAN OFFICIALS. THE TWO SIDES DISCUSSED THE FUTURE OF THE ARAB DETERRENT FORCES IN LEBANON AS WELL AS THE FUNCTIONING OF THE JOINT INVESTIGATIVE COMMITTEE AND THE JOINT SPECIAL SECURITY COURT, AND WE BELIEVE THEY PROBABLY ALSO DISCUSSED FORMATION OF A NEW LEBANESE CABINET. NO OFFICIAL  
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COMMUNIQUE WAS ISSUED, BUT ACCORDING TO THE BEIRUT PRESS THE OFFICIAL PAPER OF THE SYRIAN BA'ATH PARTY PUBLISHED AN EDITORIAL WARNING THAT: "ALL THE PERSONAL IDEAS OF THE PAST. . . MUST BE DROPPED REGARDLESS OF THEIR MAGNITUDE OR THE FACTIONS AND ALLIANCES BEHIND THEM, AND A NEW STAGE MUST START IN WHICH THE INTERESTS OF A UNITED, EASTERN, AND ARAB LEBANON ARE GIVEN PRIORITY OVER ANY OTHER INTERESTS."

5. ARAB DETERRENT FORCE.

A. PRIME MINISTER SALIM AL-HOSS CONFIRMED ON FEBRUARY 25 THAT THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT WOULD SEEK ANOTHER EXTENSION OF THE ARAB DETERRENT FORCE MANDATE, WHICH EXPIRES ON APRIL 28. 1978 IN A SEPARATE STATEMENT, PHALANGE PARTY LEADER PIERRE GEMAYEL AGREED THAT THE EXTENSION WAS NECESSARY. MOST PAPERS HAD REPORTED ON FEBRUARY 23 THAT THE GOL WOULD ASK FOR ANOTHER SIX-MONTH EXTENSION.

B. MEANWHILE, SAUDI AMBASSADOR ALI AL-CHA'ER ANNOUNCED ON FEBRUARY 23 THAT HIS GOVERNMENT HAD GIVEN THE ADF \$9 MILLION. (THIS WAS SAUDI ARABIA'S SECOND CONTRIBUTION TO THE ADF.) THE SUDANESE CHARGE D'AFFAIRES TOLD FOREIGN MINISTER BOUTROS ON FEBRUARY 27 THAT HIS COUNTRY WOULD KEEP ITS CONTINGENT IN THE ADF IF THE MANDATE WERE EXTENDED, ACCORDING TO THE LEBANESE NATIONAL NEWS AGENCY.

6. SYRIANS AT NEW U.S. CHANCERY.

ON FEBRUARY 20, SYRIAN SOLDIERS ATTEMPTED TO OCCUPY THE NEW EMBASSY CHANCERY UNDER CONSTRUCTION IN RAMLIT AL-BAYDA. THE SYRIAN OFFICER IN CHARGE SAID HE WANTED TO USE THE BUILDING AS A TRAINING SITE TO TEACH HOUSE TO HOUSE FIGHTING.

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EMBASSY SECURITY PERSONNEL EXPLAINED THAT THE BUILDING BELONGED TO THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT, AND THE SYRIAN OFFICER IN CHARGE AGREED TO FIND ANOTHER TRAINING SITE.

7. OTHER VIOLENCE.

AS BEFORE THE FAYYADIYAH INCIDENTS, BOMBINGS AND OTHER VIOLENCE CONTINUED ON A DAILY BASIS. ON FEBRUARY 22, A HAND GRENADE EXPLODED IN FRONT OF THE CITY CENTER BUILDING IN BISHARAH AL KHURI STREET IN DOWNTOWN BEIRUT. THE POLICE LATER CLAIMED TO HAVE ARRESTED THE MAN RESPONSIBLE, BISHARAH JIRIS HASHIN, WHOM EMBASSY SOURCES HAVE IDENTIFIED AS BEING A MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL LIBERAL PARTY. ON FEBRUARY 23, PHALANGE GUNMEN IN BRUMMANA FIRED ON THE PRINTANNIA HOTEL, OWNED BY THE FATHER OF THE LOCAL NLP COMMANDER, CAUSING CONSIDERABLE MATERIAL DAMAGE BUT NO CASUALTIES (SETTEL). ON FEBRUARY 24 ARMED MEN ROBBED LL 300,000 FROM THE TREASURY OF A LOCAL GOVERNMENT OFFICE IN BAABDA, ACCORDING TO AN EMBASSY SOURCE.

8. SOUTH LEBANON.

A. SHELLING BETWEEN PALESTINIANS AND CHRISTIANS CONTINUED ON A DAILY BASIS IN SOUTH LEBANON, AND CHRISTIAN SOLDIERS MOVED INTO THE BORDER TOWN OF BLIDA, ACCORDING TO DAO SOURCES. CHRISTIAN FORCES ALSO MOVED INTO MARUN AR-RAS ON MARCH 2 BUT WERE LATER EXPELLED BY THE PALESTINIANS.

B. PHALANGE RADIO REPORTED THAT UNIDENTIFIED GUNBOATS HAD TURNED BACK A SHIP CARRYING WEAPONS AND MUNITIONS AS IT TRIED TO ENTER THE PORT OF TYRE ON FEBRUARY 24. ISRAELI RADIO REPORTED ON FEBRUARY 26 THAT MORE THAN 2500 INJURED PEOPLE FROM THE CHRISTIAN ENCLAVES IN SOUTH LEBANON HAD BEEN HOSPITALIZED IN ISRAEL "SINCE ISRAEL BEGAN HELPING LEBANON."

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C. LEBANESE CIVILIANS CONTINUED TO FLEE THEIR VILLAGES IN THE SOUTH. ON FEBRUARY 22 THE SHI'A MUFTI ABDEL AMIR KABALAN URGED SOUTHERNERS TO HOLD ON TO THEIR HOMES. HE WARNED THAT THE "CONTINUED GROWING WAVE OF IMMIGRATION IS A PLAGUE THAT IS AFFLICTING THE LAND AND THE PEOPLE."

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USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES IT

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9. SAIQA MOVES INTO TYRE.  
SAIQA UNITS HAVE MOVED INTO TYRE AND THE SURROUNDING  
AREA OVER THE LAST TWO MONTHS, ACCORDING TO RELIABLE SOURCES.  
THIS IS THE FIRST TIME THAT SAIQA HAS ESTABLISHED A MEANINGFUL  
PRESENCE IN THE AREA SINCE THE 1975-76 CIVIL WAR.

10. THEFT OF UN VEHICLES.  
A. ACCORDING TO THE LOCAL PRESS, A "TOP-RANKING U.N.  
OFFICIAL" ON FEBRUARY 24 SAID THAT MORE OR LESS SYSTEMATIC  
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ROBBERIES OF UNITED NATIONS MILITARY OBSERVERS IN SOUTH LEBANON HAD BEEN GOING ON SINCE 1975. THE OFFICIAL'S STATEMENT WAS PROMPTED BY PRESS REPORTS OF ROBBERIES OF U.N. VEHICLES AND FORCED ENTRIES INTO U.N. OBSERVATION POSTS. DURING FEBRUARY, THERE WERE 14 U.N. VEHICLES HIJACKED (12 TAKEN BY CHRISTIAN FORCES) AND 33 FORCED ENTRIES INTO U.N. OBSERVATION POSTS (ALL BUT THREE OCCURRED IN CHRISTIAN HELD AREAS), ACCORDING TO U.N. STATISTICS (SEE USUN 0734).

B. COMMENT: LEBANESE LEFTISTS AND PALESTINIANS SEEM TO HAVE BEEN RESPONSIBLE FOR MOST OF THE U.N. VEHICLE THEFTS UNTIL LATE FALL OF 1977. CHRISTIANS HAVE BEEN THE CHIEF CULPRITS SINCE THAT TIME, AND SOME OBSERVERS BELIEVE THE CHRISTIANS ARE TRYING TO SQUEEZE THE UNMO'S OUT OF SOUTH LEBANON.

11. NEW PARLIAMENTARY BLOCK.

ON FEBRUARY 20 THE FOLLOWING THIRTEEN MARONITE DEPUTIES FORMED A NEW INDEPENDENT PARLIAMENTARY BLOCK: ELIAS HRAWI, ELIAS KHAZIN, MAURICE ZWAYN, FOUAD NAFFAH, PIERRE HELOU, GEBRANE TOK, HABIB KAYRUZ, FARID SIRHAL, RENE MU'AWWAD, SHAFIQ BADR, AUGUSTE BAKHUS, BOUTROS HARB, AND FATHER SAM'AN DUWAYHI. HARB TOLD THE PRESS THAT THE BLOCK WOULD WORK TO COORDINATE ITS ACTIVITIES WITH THE LEBANESE FRONT. RENE MU'AWWAD TOLD US IT WOULD NOT AND COULD NOT CHALLENGE THE FRONT. AN EMBASSY SOURCE SAID FORMATION OF THE BLOCK WAS PROMOTED BY PRESIDENT SARKIS, AS A COUNTERPOINT TO THE LEBANESE FRONT'S CLAIM TO SPEAK FOR ALL OF LEBANON'S CHRISTIANS.

12. AUB PRESIDENT INAUGURATED.

DR. HAROLD E. HOELSCHER WAS OFFICIALLY INAUGURATED AS THE EIGHTH PRESIDENT OF THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT (AUB) ON FEBRUARY 24, AT A CEREMONY ATTENDED BY SEVERAL CONFIDENTIAL

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CABINET MEMBERS. AUB'S CHAIRMAN, DR. CALVIN H. PLIMPTON, DELIVERED THE KEYNOTE ADDRESS AND REMARKED THAT "SOME OF THE BLOODIEST WARS HAVE BEEN FOUGHT AND SOME OF THE WORST PERSECUTIONS HAVE BEEN COMMITTED IN THE NAME OF HOLINESS." HE ADDED THAT A MAJOR DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A UNIVERSITY AND A RELIGION WAS THAT THE FORMER WAS "AN INSTITUTION THAT IS NOT QUITE SURE THAT IT IS RIGHT".

13. MORE TREASURY BILLS.

THE GOVERNMENT'S SIXTH BIWEEKLY OFFERING OF 90-DAY TREASURY BILLS ON FEBRUARY 28 RAISED LL 101.3 (\$35 MILLION), BRINGING THE TOTAL RAISED BY THIS METHOD SINCE DECEMBER 9 LAST YEAR TO LL 697 MILLION (\$238 MILLION). LIKE ITS PREDECESSORS, THE MOST RECENT ISSUE WAS OVERSUBSCRIBED (LL 225.3 MILLION OFFERED), INDICATING THAT THE GOL WILL FACE

NO DIFFICULTY AS IT BEGINS ROLLING OVER THE FIRST GENERATION  
OF THESE BILLS NEXT WEEK.  
PARKER

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## Message Attributes

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Sheryl P. Walter  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
20 Mar 2014  
**Markings:** Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014